

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-05 ADP-00 EB-05 RSR-01 RSC-01 DOTE-00

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /023 W
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R 051000Z JUL 73

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2854

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 0562

DEPT. PASS COMMERCE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, SF

SUBJECT: JOHANNESBURG MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM

REF: STATE 123595 (NOTAL)

1. CONGEN CONTACTED CHAIRMAN, JOHANNESBURG CITY COUNCIL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TO OBTAIN STATUS REPORT ON PLANS FOR RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM. HE REFERRED US TO CITY ENGINEERING DEPT. WHICH GAVE US FOLLOWING INFO:
DEPARTMENT HAS SPENT 4 YEARS DEVELOPING ALL COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT SYSTEM, ENVISAGED FOR COMPLETION 1985, WHICH WOULD INCLUDE RAPID RAIL SYSTEM (UNDERGROUND AND SURFACE), MOTORWAYS AND PARKING GARAGES. PLAN HAS NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY JOHANNESBURG CITY COUNCIL AS CITY LACKS FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO FOOT ESTIMATED MINIMUM R500 MILLION (\$750 MILLION) COST. COMMENT: ONLY SOURCE CITY REVENUE IS PROPERTY TAXATION OF SOME 120,000 RATEPAYERS IN THIS CITY OF 1.5 MILLION.

2. CITY APPROACHED SA GOVERNMENT RE FUNDING ASSISTANCE AND SAG HAS APPOINTED COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORT DRIESSEN, TO STUDY ENTIRE QUESTION OF NATIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO URBAN AUTHORITIES FOR MASS TRANSPORT. (NO SUCH ARRANGE-
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MENT CURRENTLY EXISTS). COMMITTEE FINDINGS WILL SUPPOSEDLY BE

ISSUED LATER THIS YEAR. IF FAVORABLE, THE CABINET WOULD STILL HAVE TO APPROVE COMMITTEE DECISION AND PARLIAMENT WOULD NEED PASS IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION, A PROCESS THE CITY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT ESTIMATES COULD TAKE 7 TO 18 MONTHS.

3. COMMENT: AS OBVIOUS FROM ABOVE, ISSUE WHETHER JOHANNESBURG WILL HAVE RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM FAR FROM SETTLED. NATIONALIST PARTY PRESS JULY 2 SPECULATED THAT DRIESSEN COMMITTEE WOULD REJECT NATIONAL FUNDING PROPOSED AS JOHANNESBURG TOO SMALL TO WARRANT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM AND PRICE TAG TOO HIGH. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN OF CITY COUNCIL, WHICH CONTROLLED BY OPPOSITION PARTY, MAINTAINS SYSTEM NECESSARY AS TRAFFIC WILL CHOKE JOHANNESBURG TO DEATH AND NOTED CITY COUNCIL HAS SET ASIDE R200,000 FOR UNDERGROUND PLANNING DURING APRIL 73 - MARCH 74 PERIOD.

4. CONGEN WILL CONTACT CITY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT AGAIN 2-3 MONTHS TIME FOR FURTHER REPORT STATUS THIS PROJECT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973JOHANN00562
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: JOHANNESBURG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730754/aaaabnma.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION COME
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 STATE 123595 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hilburpw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15-Jan-2002 by phillir0>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2002 by hilburpw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOHANNESBURG MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM
TAGS: ETRN, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005